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MORAL DEVELOPMENT
IN JUDAISM

JOHN SPANJER BUUS
A.B. HASTINGS COLLEGE 1930

THESIS
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Chapter I

PRIMITIVE MORALITY

Anthropologists now share the prevailing opinion that religion is universal; that no tribe or group of people, however savage or barbarous they may be, exists without religion in one form or another. Although some have returned from foreign fields and reported that they have found tribes or a tribe without religion in any form, closer research has always proved the contrary. Their ways of worshiping a totem or a visible or invisible god, or whatever they or we care to call it, may not, to many westerners, seem to be worthy of the dignified term 'religion'. This, however, may partly be due to our definition of religion. If we agree with Webster's dictionary, which says that religion is "The outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a god or of gods having power over their destiny, to whom obedience, service and honor are due", we must of necessity call these existing beliefs and ceremonies, however barbarous, 'religion'.

In like manner we may now observe the philosophy of 'right' and 'wrong', or morality, which has existed along with religion. Here again the interrogation of doubt interrupts. "Can you say that these uncivilized

people had morals?" From our point of view and our western definition of morals we may be compelled to answer in the negative. But we must remember that "the words 'morals', 'morality', 'ethics', 'ethical' show in their etymology the primitive association of ideas with the customs of the community."[1] Certainly no one can conceive of a community or tribe of people existing without social customs or rules to maintain order and respect, such as it was, within the group, and to which its members were obliged to conform. Conformity to customs, however primitive or advanced these may be, is morality. It is obvious that many of such customs would be of no moral value to us, while some are even so primitive and repugnant to our conception of ethics and morals that we brand them as unethical and immoral. But the members of the tribe were under obligation to conform to their customs as thoroughly as we are expected to conform to the laws of our state. It was not so much 'need' as tradition and customs of the primitive peoples which constituted the social laws.

The customs of the tribe were well known by its adult members. The young men, as they grew into manhood and were ready to assume a man's responsibilities and to carry arms in war, were initiated into their own group in

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1-Birth & Growth of Religion--G. F. Moore P.64

a fashion somewhat similar to our western style of initiating new members into a fraternity. However, the rites of initiation among the primitive peoples were frequently of a terrifying and painful kind. The floggings and whippings, which constituted a great part of the event, fixed indelible impressions upon the minds of the initiated and also fixed forever in his memory the morals of the group. In some particular instances such injunctions as: 'Do not steal, do not commit adultery, honor your parents, obey your chief, live in peace, do not assault girls or married women,' were emphasized probably by an extra flogging.

Thus the young men were welcomed into manhood by the infliction of pain to emphasize conformity to the morals or customs of their particular group. However severe these inflictions were, and it is hard to imagine that they might have been mild, they served a double purpose. As has been said, they left an impression on the minds of the initiated as well as fixed the morals permanently within their memory, and also served as a miniature taste of what would befall them if they were disobedient or transgressed the customs. The transgressors were ordinarily severely punished because most of the customs were essential to the perpetuation of the group as well as for its well-being, and the violation of such customs

affected the entire group and seriously excited its resentment. It was not uncommon for the transgressor to pay the price of disobedience with his life. Death was possibly the most common punishment, but excommunication from the group was also used.

A person driven out of the community was a man without a country, and his life was in constant danger. For this reason Cain, after having slain his brother Abel, cried unto his god who had told him that he must go forth out of the community and be a wanderer and fugitive in the land, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold thou has driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass that whosoever findeth me will slay me."[2] Cain knew what it meant to become a man without a home. A wanderer or a fugitive represented a transgressor of the customs. The very fact that he was driven out of his group proved that he was a dangerous man because no group would diminish its man power without a reason, for its safety depended upon its man power to protect it from attacks from other groups. A wanderer was considered a dangerous man and no group desired to add him to its membership, nor did anyone consider it immoral to slay him.

2-Gen. 4:13

The horrors of punishment handed out to the transgressor were made as fearful as possible to the entire membership of the group. In case death was the penalty, stoning was a common method for slaying the victim. In order to press an indelible picture of fear and the horrors of death upon the minds of the group, each male member was compelled to take an active part in the slaying, i.e. each man had to throw rocks at the victim and watch him die. It was not the case of having as spectators a few newspaper reporters, a physician and a few others. Everyone had to take an active part in the slaying.

Thus we see that it was not a custom of the primitive people merely to tell the oncoming generation that they were expected to be obedient to the social regulations, as is common in our day of the so-called 'state of higher civilization and high moral standard.' "Obey or die" might rightly be set up as a motto for the primitive group.

What about 'right' and 'wrong'? They did not question whether it was 'right' or 'wrong' to compel a transgressor of the customs to pay the penalty with his life. Such a question probably never entered a single mind until almost modern times, and even now it apparently is an open question to some of the most Christ-like of people. 'Right' to the primitive peoples meant anything which found universal approbation, and everything, however worthy and

valuable it might seem to us, which excited the indignation and resentment of the group as a whole was branded 'wrong'.[3]

'Right' and 'wrong' existed only for the members and welfare of the group. There was no such thing as inter-tribal morality. The customs of a particular tribe were for that tribe only, and its members were compelled to conform to no rule or custom outside of the group. To slay a man of another tribe was not transgressing the customs and therefore it was not 'wrong', but to disobey or disrespect parents was a serious crime and punishable by death.

A word must be inserted here concerning the individual man and what we might term for convenience' sake his conscience. We are perfectly aware of the fact that in our modern social order are committed many minor and also major crimes, the executors of which are never brought to light. Many people today say, "Well, if you can 'get by' with it, all right," not respecting or even considering their moral obligation toward the law.

It was not so with the primitive man. His initiation into the group made a lasting moral impression on him. In case of disobedience to the customs, he suffered severe physical pain if not death; but what was even more painful was the inner pain or what we call the sufferings

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3-Birth & Growth of Religion-G. F. Moore P.65

of conscience. It does not necessarily follow that every primitive transgressor came and gave himself up or confessed his disobedience, but he suffered remorse and was self-condemned. He did not consider it a joke, or that he was too smart for the law. He was a violator of the law and was inwardly condemned for it.

Primitive man's religious life was not severed from his social, business and tribal life. His religion was so integrated with his whole life that whatever was social was also religious, and that which was business or tribal was likewise carried out through religious ceremonies. Every family, social, business or tribal--later national--office demanded the sanction and witness of the god or gods of the people. For an illustration we may cite the well-known event of the early Hebrew Father Jacob and his Father-in-law, Laban, who, after speaking angry words to each other because of injustice received during past years, took stones and made a heap of them to serve as a pillar and then sat beside it and said, "Jehovah watch between me and thee while we are absent one from the other...see, God is witness betwixt me and thee."[4]

This illustration may well serve as a typical example of how the gods or god of the peoples were called

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4-Gen. 31:45 ff

upon to witness and sanction the act. This held true of family affairs as well as national. Not even a beast or fowl was slaughtered for family food without calling upon the god and offering a part of the victim to him.

Chapter II

EARLY BIBLICAL CONCEPTION OF GOD

This chapter is deliberately entitled "Early Biblical Conception of God" in preference to a similar one, "Early Hebrew Conception of God" for the simple reason that we do not know what the early Hebrew--even as late as Moses--thought about God. "Did not Moses write the pentateuch?" some will gladly interrupt. "No, Moses did not write it." Space and time will not permit presenting the arguments pro and con to Mosaic authorship, but a word must be saud concerning this valuable fragmentary literature. It is indeed a source of regret that the word 'fragmentary' must be inserted and that this word describes so accurately the remains of what must originally have been far more extensive materials.

The art of writing is a rather late development in the civilization of mankind. For many hundreds or even thousands of years business was transacted, and tradition transmitted only orally. Religion, as has been indicated above, was a part of the group tradition and was thus handed down from father to son. Through the course of generations, each generation adding or subtracting according to its own needs and interests, the verbal traditions were somewhat changed. The fragmentary literature which we find in the pentateuch was

put into writing many centuries after the time of Moses. Thus our information concerning the religion of the patriarchal period is even more inaccurate because it deals with a period still more remote. We indeed have a record of the patriarchs, the Exodus, and Moses, for which we are most thankful, but the fact is that these traditions existed for at least five centuries before any person or group of persons collected and put them into literature.

"The collection of traditions made in Judah is known as J; the one made in the north, in Ephraim, is designated by the symbol E, and their compilers are known as the Yahvist and the Elohist respectively. They both exhibit to some extent the point of view of the early prophets and are, therefore, known as the Prophetic Documents. About 650 B.C. they were compiled into a single document (JE) and suffered considerably in the process, from expurgation, editing, and harmonizing. A hundred years later they were subjected to a still more thorough revision at the hands of the Deuteronomic editors. After two more centuries had rolled by they were incorporated into the framework of the Priests' Code, and received the most radical--perhaps one should say the most distorting--revision

of all."[1] From this brief description of the literature of our pentateuch it will be understood that in presenting the conception of God we shall confine ourself to the Biblical literature as we have it. Thus we cannot say Abraham believed this and that, or that Moses actually carved the ten commandments on rock, but we can say that this is what the recorders of the traditions believed at their own time. It must therefore be observed that our information concerning the time before the art of writing is necessarily indirect; first because the records are the results of oral traditions which had passed through half a millennium or more, and secondly because we have only fragments of the original manuscripts to study. But we must be careful now not to jumpto conclusions and say that after all we know nothing about the early times. We must remember that some of the ceremonies probably passed through the centuries unaltered, and that the oral traditions, changed as they were, did not depart so widely from the original as do some of our modern impressions.

God, to the early patriarchs and Israelites, was the God of Israel only. He was concerned only with his small group of people and not with the foreigners. He

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1-"Old Testament in Light of Today"--W. F. Bade P.19

was an anthropomorphic god. He walked in the garden at the cool of day and called Adam and Eve.[2] He met Moses "at the lodging place...and sought to kill him,"[3] and because Zipporah said "Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me" he left him alone. It was not uncommon for the Hebrews to believe and write that Yahweh (the name of the Hebrew God) came down and fought off the enemy and gave to them the victory. "And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaga, and all the country of Grahen, even unto Gibeon. And all these kings and their lands did Joshua take at one time, because Yahweh, the God of Israel, fought for Israel."[4] Examples of this nature could be multiplied many times but only one more familiar one shall be cited. Every Church-going person knows something about the Israelites under the leadership of Moses crossing the Red Sea after the exodus, and that the Israelites crossed the sea on dry ground and that the Egyptians were drowned, even Pharoah and all his host and that the Israelites saw them (the Egyptians) dead upon the sea shore. But few people know Genesis 14:24-25: "And it came to pass in the morning watch, that Yahweh looked forth upon the host

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2-Gen. 3:8

3-Ex. 4:24

4-Jos. 10:41-42

of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of Egyptians. And he took off their chariot wheels and they drove them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel; for Yahweh fighteth for them against the Egyptians," from which it is evident that the author of that particular passage did not believe that Yahweh destroyed the Egyptians by drowning them but he fought for the Israelites by coming down and discomfiting the chariots to the extent that the Egyptians turned and fled for their own life.

The God of Israel was in early times not an all-wise God. Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked places, we are told. But the records also tell us that "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know it."[5]

He was not the universal God ever present in spirit. They cry of the wicked had reached his ears, but to make sure that it was as bad as he had heard he went in person and investigated.

Man apparently is a hopeless moral being without the influence and hope of a higher ideal toward which he

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5-Gen. 18:20-21

may look for assistance and as an example. Henry Jackson seems to believe that a man must first know what another man thinks of him before he is willing to forsake his low standards and prove himself to be what the other thinks of him.

This is true of the present civilized man, but it was even more true of the early Hebrews. They did not have the perfect example of Jesus to follow. Their conception of man at his best was that of a sheikhø, or a king, whose duty it was to fight off the enemy and to judge the people or dispense judgment.[6]

Such examples as were available for them were far from perfect. Even by their own standards of the time many of these sheikhs and kings were selfish, cruel, brutal, and barbarous; their judgments were unjust and unfair, many of them being passed while the judge was under the influence of intoxicating beverages, and often they were compelled to fight for their own lives. Imperfect as these men proved to be, they were still the best examples within reach. It was from these examples that the people proceeded to frame their conception of Yahweh. We need not be surprised nor disturbed then, to discover that their moral conception of Yahweh does not measure up to our moral standards for God. Moses

6-I Sam. 8:20

felt it no moral sin to cause Yahweh to command him to tell the people to borrow all the jewels they could possibly get from the Egyptians, with the intent of leaving the country by night and keeping the borrowed articles.[7] Yahweh was not a perfect moral God because they, the people, had no perfect example to which to look, and man attributes morals to God only as he finds them first in man.

A student turning from the fragmentary literature of the pentateuch to the early prophetic literature of Amos and Hosea notes a distinct difference, or let us rather say a noted advancement, concerning the morals attributed to God. Amos, a shepherd, came from Tekoa with the message of the rigidity of God's justice and righteousness, "Let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream."[8] Hosea the unhappy husband, proclaims the inextinguishable message of Yahweh's love for his people, the 'House of Israel.'

7-Ex. 12:35

8-Amos 5:24

Chapter III

THE DECALOGUE

The schools which hold fast to the old views of the Old /Testament of course contend that it is verbally inspired by God and therefore divinely authoritative and literally true concerning each subject it undertakes to discuss. Thus Adam was the first man; Noah and his family were the only survivors after the flood; Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, and during the forty years of 'sojourn' in the wilderness he ascended Mount Sinai in obedience to the command of Yahweh and there received from Yahweh "tablets of stone written with the finger of God""and the law and the commandments," in full which before that hour had never been in existence. To these schools the commandments concerning rituals and those concerning ethics sprang into existence simultaneously.

Such a closed view is almost compelled to exclude from their reasoning the fact that we have two sets of commandments which were published two or three centuries apart, and that they are similar but not identical, the divergency being not so much in words as in the motive. For instance, the fourth commandment in regard to the reason for observing the Sabbath day. The Elohistic recorder, who is the older, states

as his reason for observing the Sabbath that Yahweh created the world 'and all that in them is' in six days and refrained from working on the seventh day. Therefore, as Yahweh rested the seventh day and hallowed it, so man should refrain from all work on the Sabbath. Not only should the lord or master rest, but all his children, his slaves, his beasts of burden, and even the 'sojourner' who may reside in his house that day.[1]

The Deuteronomists several centuries later say that man should observe the Sabbath because Yahweh has commanded it, not because Yahweh himself rested on that day and that man should do as He did. Yahweh commanded man to rest on the Sabbath. The master's children, his slaves, his beasts of burden, and the 'stranger' should all rest together. No one should work.[2]

The Yahvistic code furnishes us with another set of commandments. These, however, differ more widely from those mentioned above. They are not concerned so much with ethics as they are with the religious ceremonies, the feasts, and offerings. The first commandment of E and D are alike, but J, which is most likely the oldest of all, differs by commanding only that no molten gods shall be worshipped, whereas E and D say

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1-Ex. 20:8-11

2-Dt. 5:12-14

"no other god," but Yahweh.

Concerning the commandment on observing the Sabbath, this oldest code merely commands the people to observe the Sabbath at all times 'in plowing times and harvest times,' without giving a reason. All the other rules are concerned with rituals and feasts which must be observed.[3]

An introductory course of study in the history of ethics will persuade any open-minded student that ethical laws have not and do not miraculously spring into existence because "the almost unanimous testimony of human experience shows that the law maker does not precede, but follows the developing social conscience."[4] There is abundant evidence to show that the Hebrew people were not an exception. A still more weighty testimony against the idea that the decalogue was given suddenly and full-grown is the Hammurabi Code, which preceded the time of Moses by a millennium. It records that acts such as murder, theft, false witness, and adultery were penalized, and we find these faults commonly mentioned in the "prayers and confessions in other early literature of Egypt and Babylon."[4]

Without further discussing the origin of these

3-Ex. 34

4-Old Testament in Light of Today--Bade P.87 P.88

ritual and ethical commandments we shall turn our attention to their ethical and moral values, the tone of which is very high for an early people. As has been said above, such acts as murder, theft, adultery, and the like were penalized many years before the time of Moses, and we have reason to believe that such acts were forbidden among the Hebrews before they arrived at Mount Sinai. Moses, as he saw the Egyptian who was smiting a Hebrew "looked this way and that and when he saw there was no one, he smote the Egyptian." And when he discovered to his surprise the following day that it was known, he fled from the land for fear that his life might be taken. Murder was a forbidden act. Thus it was also with theft and with adultery. But we may believe that after these commandments were written down so that those who could read might read them, they had an influence upon the morality of the people and that their lives and property were a little safer than ever before.

The fifth commandment, 'honor thy father and thy mother' has given us reason to believe that a similar law existed, if not written, orally and in practice, long before the time of Moses. It is most difficult to believe that this commandment was addressed to children who were still under the authority of the

father. At the time of the composition of this rule the father was the soul master of all his possessions, and his wives and children were a part of his property.

If we accept, however, that it was addressed "to adult male Israelites only"[5] the father and mother become the aged parents and the sons those who have their own families and homes. Under all probability the daughter was excluded, because on date of marriage she lost all her independence and relations to her maiden home.

Why a commandment for adult sons to honor their parents? One can easily see a reason if he recalls the Old Testament records of Noah and Jacob blessing their sons. One received the blessing while the other received the curse. The records then continue to show how these blessings and curses literally came true. The ones receiving the blessings prospered according to the words of their father, while the ones cursed to become servants, actually became the servants. Thus it was profitable for a son to honor his parents in order to receive a blessing and not a curse.

There is, however, probably a more definite and a much deeper reason for this commandment. In ancient times ancestral worship was not uncommon. The ancestors

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5-Old Testament in Light of Today--Bade P.114

were worshipped only through the sons and not through the daughters. The father, as long as he lived, was the only one of the family who could perform the ceremonies and offer the food to the dead--the ancestors. After the death of the father the eldest son succeeded him. In this manner the family religion was perpetuated. For a family religion to cease was most disgraceful. One can readily see the significance and need of the commandment where the family cultus depends upon the sons and in their honoring their parents. Honoring parents therefore, became a most sacred duty for the sons.

The emphasise which these early people placed on truthfulness--"thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"--is worthy of our utmost attention. Whether this commandment is given directly to witnesses in a court trial, or whether it condemns directly and mainly the acts of such "base-fellows" as Jezebel, who the wife of Ahab, the king of Samaria, had hired to bear false witness against Naboth who had committed no legal crime, matters not. The merit of the whole thing is that no man should even try to direct slander and public opinion against the reputation of a fellow Hebrew. It must be remembered that a few false witness could stir public opinion, as was the case with Naboth, to the extent that

the person against whom the slander was directed would immediately be slain.

A good reputation meant everything to a man, whether in business or not. No one could afford to have public opinion against him, for it was too strong and powerful, and frequently resulted in stoning or severe punishment, as was the case with Naboth. A man, however innocent he might be, received no chance or court trial to prove his innocence, even if a few "base-fellows" swore falsehood against him. "Bear not false witness" against a man.

The study of psychology under this title was of course unknown to the authors of the decalogue. But the author of our tenth commandment has at his disposal a greater command of the working principles of the influence that 'thought' has upon 'action' than is recognized by people who have studied say, in our colleges. We cannot authoritatively say that the author had concluded from observational study that evil thought if continued, would lead to evil action. It is obvious that he knew that vicious acts were at times the direct result of coveting. David, whose passions were aroused by the sight of the beautiful wife of Uriah the Hittite, planned a scheme to dispose of her legal husband. (2 S.11) Abimelech beheld the vacant throne with a desiring eye

and he "slew his brethren, the sons of Jerubbaal, being three score and ten persons." (Jg 9 5b) Ahab lustfully coveted the beautiful vineyard near his palace, and it resulted in the act of the murder of the legal owner. (K I 21) Thus coveting in itself was branded immoral and condemned.

Chapter IV

MORALS OF DEUTERONOMY

The Book of Deuteronomy has been reserved because it isthe work of a later period and therefore must be treated separately. We must not think, however, that it is an entirely new set of moral and ethical codes; "he (the Deuteronomist) does not merely collect, or repeat, a series of laws, he 'expounds' them, i.e. he develops them with reference to the moral purposes which they subserve, and the motives by which the Israelites shall feel prompted to obey them."[1]

Deuteronomy accepts the existing religious and social conditions. Inquiring into its application of these laws 'to the moral purposes' of the time concerning human rights we see that "Deuteronomy, like the earlier codes, has no conscience regarding the institution of slavery."[2] Deuteronomy regards foreign slavery as probably the worst thing that can befall a Hebrew. (Dt. 28:32) It provides freedom for such as succeeded in escaping from the foreign master in Palestine. (Dt. 23:15-16) Death was to be the punishment dealt out to a Hebrew who was found dealing with a kinsman as a slave or who sold him into slavery.(Dt. 24:7)

1-Introduction to Literature of Old Testament-Driver P.71

2-Old Testament in Light of Today-W. F. Bade P.220

The person who had sold himself into slavery, or was forced into it because of debts, should be set free at the end of six years. (Dt. 15:12-18) The master must not drive him out empty-handed, but from his over-supply should give liberally to the freed slave so that he might provide for himself and not fall back into slavery. The freed slave, however, had the alternative of choice. If he loved his master, or if his family was in slavery and he desired to be with them, he might become a permament slave. (Dt. 15:16f) This very provision shows that Hebrew masters apparently were not cruel to the slaves.

It must, however, be observed that Deuteronomy, like the earlier codes, regards Yahweh as the God of the Hebrews only. Yahweh has no moral obligation to fulfill to foreigners. That well-known passage which reads: "Ye shall not eat anything that dieth of itself; thou mayest give it unto the sojourner that is within thy gates, that he may eat of it; or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner; for thou art an holy people unto Yahweh thy God,"[3] is sufficient to show that all Yahweh's obligations are to the Israelites.

As Yahweh has no obligations but to the Hebrews, so the Hebrews have no obligations to meet but those to Yahweh and to fellow-Hebrews. Deuteronomy tells

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3-Dt. 14:21

creditors that they must cancel a debt of a Hebrew at the end of every seven years, but "of a foreigner thou mayest exact it."[4] Likewise was it in regard to slavery. A foreigner could be sold into slavery for a debt and never be freed, whereas his Hebrew neighbor was freed after six years. It is curious to note that Deuteronomy allows Hebrews to marry foreign women who have been captured in war, but a Hebrew who married such was not allowed to sell her into slavery in case he ceased to love her. He must let her go free.

Deuteronomy undertakes to legislate many detailed regulations concerning family and social life as well as business, but the main principle which it condemns is the "following after strange gods." Of this idolatry we know very little outside of what we may conclude from the book itself. It is, however, evident that the idolatrous practices were threatening social well-being. To avoid any drastic means of breaking down idolatry the Deuteronomists, through literature, used Moses as their spokesman and preceded the sayings with the old familiar phrase "Thus saith Yahweh," and advocated a centralized worship to bring the Israelites back to a common worship. Thus they proclaimed, "Hear, Oh Israel,

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4-Dt. 15:1-3

Yahweh our Lord is one Yahweh."[5] "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest, but in the place which Yahweh shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings."[6] They are to bring all their offerings of whatever nature to the one central altar and abolish all the altars erected to strange gods. It is evident that for a long time there was no restriction as to place of offering. Yahweh said, "in every place where I record my name"[7] shall ye bring your offering. The emphasis was placed on method of offering. The law had to be followed in minute detail.

5-Dt. 6:4

6-Dt. 12:13-14

7-Ex. 20:24

Chapter V

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah came as a young man from the village of Anathoth into the city of Jerusalem. The period of his public work included two notable historical events, the former being Josiah's reform, which was stimulated by the "Book of the Law" (namely the Book of Deuteronomy) and the latter the fall of Jerusalem which included the Babylonian exile.

Pade in The Old Testament in Light of Today entitled the chapter on Jeremiah "The First Great Heretic." Immediately the question arises "Why was Jeremiah a Heretic?" Did he disapprove of the reform and the"Book of the Law"? Did he have objections to the existing religion? There has been much discussion on Jeremiah's attitude toward Deuteronomy, and it is difficult to say definitly one way or the other. However, a careful study of the two will show that on the whole, Jeremiah's teachings are not opposed to Deuteronomy. Jeremiah saw that the 'laws' were too freely handled and misinterpreted. "When its emphasis upon spiritual motives was perverted into excessive regard for ritual observances; when the law of a single sanctuary, intended to emancipate religion from its degrading connection with the former Canaanite high places, was invoked for the

protection of priestly pretention and a superstitious faith in the magic values of the Jerusalem temple, Jeremiah became a critic of Deuteronomy and the legalism which its official expounders read into it."[1] In other words, Jeremiah severely criticised the religion of the time. The people claimed that Yahweh would protect the temple from all foreign invaders, while Jeremiah said that the day would come in which invaders would ruin the temple. He, like Paul in his time, spoke boldly and fearlessly. Against the cry of the priest and people, he said, "Amend your ways and your doings and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doing; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless and the widows and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt, then will I cause you to dwell in this place..."[2] To see the officials of the temple play with the 'laws' and use them for selfish purposes, set aflame the prophet with the unquenchable fire of enthusiasm which

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1-Old Testament in Light of Today-Bade P.262

2-Jer. 7:30-7a

was kindled in Paul by the stubbornness of the Corinthians. Uprightness of character, justice to fellow men, respect and sympathy for the unfortunate ones, the fatherless and widows, and to render due service do God Yahweh and not follow after many gods, was Jeremiah's conception of 'serving the Lord'.

Jeremiah, as he condemned the magic protection of the temple, fell into serious conflict with the people, because they rested contentedly in that belief and lived as they pleased. Their religion was a matter of cults and observation of the laws concerning sacrifices, not a matter of the heart which must find expression in conformity to moral laws. The Deuteronomists prescribed as Mosaic legislation laws regulating sacrifices in the central temple; Jeremiah, seeing them misused, branded them as the product of "the lying pen of the scribes." In addition he exclaims, "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I bought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices, but hearken unto my voice and I will be your god."[3]

Thus we see that he denied the very origin of sacrifice as commanded by God. Only false prophets

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3-Jer. 7:22

who were personally profiting through the offerings were responsible for such sacrilegious laws. "To burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded not, neither came it into my mind."[4] These laws, as they were used, were to Jeremiah an offense and a detriment to the advancement of civilization and the development of morals. He therefore, in the name of Yahweh, boldly protests.

4-Jer. 7:31b

Chapter VI

THE PERIOD OF EXILE

Jeremiah was right when he said that Yahweh would not always miraculously protect the temple. In his own days he saw his words materialized and the Jews led away into captivity in Babylon, while he himself received great liberties from the hands of the conquering king, Nebuchadrezzar--liberties of which his friends refused him the exercise by taking him against his wish into Egypt.

In Babylon conditions were beginning to appear very dark. The people, still living under the theory of group responsibility and the idea that God was "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third, and upon the fourth generation," did not ask themselves why they were in captivity but found comfort and rest in the belief that they were suffering for the sins their fathers had committed. However, as the captivity prolonged, their desire of returning to Jerusalem overpowered their rest and peace. Those in exile cried out, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" while those who remained at home, also dissatisfied, said, "Yahweh sees us not, Yahweh hath forsaken the land."

From among these thoroughly discontented people in

the hands of the enemy in a foreign land, there arose a young priest, the son of a priest, Ezekiel by name. His immediate task was to find an answer to such outrageous charges and complaints against Yahweh. He could not find rest in the old doctrines. Continuously he was faced with the problem, "Why does Israel suffer?" Denying the theory that they were suffering because their fathers had sinned, but holding to the belief that good deeds were rewarded by material prosperity and evil by misfortune, he was compelled to turn in a new direction and to advance a new theory.

"What mean ye that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children'steeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel..The soul that sinneth, it shall die."[1] It would not be surprising to us that this new theory opened the eyes of many and forced them to 'consider your ways'. Ezekiel, however, does not give us such encouragement. Too often must he say 'then ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me.'

With the new theory of individual responsibility, the great prophet had no difficult task, nor need he turn to past history to find abundant evidence to justify Yahweh

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1-Eze. 18:2,3,4b

to 'cause the children of Israel to suffer'. Jerusalem was a mighty city surrounded by nations which served 'strange gods'. Sodom had become proud, unsympathetic and self-righteous: "Therefore took I her away as I saw good."[2] Samaria also was an evil nation but "neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins."[3] So long is the list of offenses and their sequences which Ezekiel catalogues, that it is almost tiresome to struggle through it. Among the offenses we find many violations of moral laws such as murder, violation of sexual taboo, bribery, lying, oppression of the widows and fatherless, lewdness, juggling of weights and measures, and the like. Each one being a moral offense to man as well as to Yahweh there is sufficient reason to justify Yahweh's wrath. One will represent the prophet rightly by saying that he re-emphasizes the key notes, 'justice' and 'character', of Amos and Jeremiah respectively.

Ezekiel, in his prolonged list of sins, condemns as most offensive several practices which have become common to the Israelites, which need individual attention. He, like his predecessor Jeremiah, had to meet the mass of people and their leaders, which they called "false prophets." He charges them with feeling no moral obligations

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2-Eze. 16:50b

3-Eze. 16:51a

and deliberately teaching the people what they know to be false and even harmful to them. Moreover, they are doing it not to meet the complaints of the people and comfort them, not for the good of the people, but for a selfish end and personal gain. "Ye have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread,"[4] "They have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many in the midst thereof."[5]

J. M. P. Smith calls our attention to an important point by saying that one must not too readily condemn the 'false prophets' because they and Ezekiel were representatives of opposing points of view and that allowance must be made for the influence of their theology. If all opposing conversations which must have taken place were preserved, it would not be surprising to find that each considered himself right and could morally justify himself and find moral laxities in the other.

The second important and harmful practice condemned by the prophet was in relation to the temple. The beautiful temple which the Jews admired, in which they believed Yahweh to be present, which they claimed Yahweh would magically protect from all destructive enemies, lay in ruins. Ezekiel must find a reason for this destruction.

4-Eze. 13:19

5-Eze. 22:25

Why did Yahweh permit this destruction? Did he not have power over the enemy's god? He believed Yahweh to be the most powerful god and therefore found in the people's practices a reason for the permission of the destruction.

He claims that the Jews have committed abominations such as whoredom, and the burial of kings in the temple "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet."[6] The idea of practicing whoredom in the temple, the place where Yahweh is especially present, was indeed a severe charge against the people and it had stirred the wrath of God to such a degree that he permitted the destruction.

The idea of ritual uncleaness played a very important part in the religion of the early Semites down to the downfall of Judaism. A person was considered unclean and unfit to offer sacrifice in the temple whether deliberately or accidentally he had touched a corpse and must perform certain ceremonies, including washing, to render himself clean. Likewise, was a certain portion of the ground around the temple holy. If by chance a cow wandered off onto this holy land, the owner could not claim it because the cow had touched the holy ground and must thereafter be permitted to wander at random, without an owner. Thus Ezekiel claims that Yahweh is

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6-Eze. 46:7

offended and refuses to dwell in the temple near which the dead bodies of the kings are resting. He says that there is only a wall between them and evidently the prophet believes that these corpses had rendered the entire temple unclean. When all these abominations shall be removed Yahweh will again make the temple his everlasting dwelling place in the midst of the children of Israel. But Israel must first men its ways. It is not sufficient that a few leaders reform. Israel must reform, it must cast off all trespasses, extensive drinking, and must walk after the statutes of Yahweh. A city smitten by the wrath of God shall not be saved for ten or five or even these righteous "three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job"[7] were in it. They could not but save their own life. Thus all the children of Israel must obey the laws of Yahweh and be law-abiding citizens and render justiceto their fellow men, even the 'stranger'.

The greatest and most important step of advancement which Ezekiel takes in the moral realm is the 'New Covenant.' He, like all succeeding prophets stresses the importance of being law-abiding citizens, but he would say, do not obey the law for the sake of the law but write these laws in your hearts and obey them for the sake of their moral value. "This is the covenant...and in their

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7-Eze. 14:14a

heart will I write it."[8] A man's goodness and justice must come from within, it cannot come from without. He has produced a doctrine which Jesus stressed. That from without going into a man cannot defile him, but that which proceedeth from within, from the heart, that defileth a man.[9] God is not satisfied with devotion to good deeds because the laws ask it of man. What God desires and rewards is good deeds done inspired from within and for the pleasure and satisfaction of enriching ones own life and those about him.

The interesting fact about Ezekiel is that he advanced several new and higher moral doctrines, by discarding the old Israelitists beliefs. He was not satisfied to believe that they were suffering for the sins of their fathers nor that they could be saved through the righteousness of a few, nor did he believe that obeying a law because it was a law was sufficient to Yahweh. Thus far he pioneered into new moral wildernesses. If, however, one questions Ezekiel why Israel went astray or where the cause of sin lay, he falls back on the old doctrines for support. He cannot see that the people are to accept the responsibility of choosing between right or wrong, or that God gives man the freedom of choice. He, like the author

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8-Jer. 31:33

9-Mark 7

of II Samuel who records that Yahweh commanded David to number the people. As he executes the command he is punished. Apparently Yahweh has given the command for no other reason than to justify himself to punish David. So Ezekiel lays the cause of the sin on Yahweh and not on the people. Where later writers say Satan has tempted man and has given wicked ordinances and is the cause of disaster and plagues, as with Job, Ezekiel does not hesitate to say that Yahweh had determined to destroy Israel and had given them wicked and sinful laws and statutes to the end that he could be morally justified for his action. "I let them have laws that were evil and customs that could not bring them life, and I made their very sacrifices befoul them, as they burned their first-born children alive--that I might destroy them."[10] Ezekiel no more than the author of II Samuel considered it immoral to say that Yahweh had incited the people to sin so that he might punish them.

Ezekiel, however, does not leave the people wondering with the unencouraging and dark description of Yahweh. He is not ready to stop there. He leads his discouraged and disheartened people to look forward to the day when their enemies shall be destroyed and thy, the children of Israel, shall be victorious and shall be the only survivors. But they are not to fear. Yahweh will restore

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10-Eze. 20:25-26

and multiply them. "You wonder whence the population of the new golden age is coming. Put consider now: it is inexplicable to you how Yahweh can bring the dead back to life; and yet we know that he can and does do it. Even so, though we know not how, Yahweh can and will bring to life again our dead nation and restore us to our own land and establish us as his people."[11] Thus the people are encouraged by the prophet to know that they shall again return to their beloved Jerusalem and enjoy liberty.

11-Moral Life of Hebrews--J. M. P. Smith P.175

Chapter VII

THE PRIESTS' CODE

The study of the Priests' Code takes us back into the fragmentary literature of the pentateuch. It furnishes the framework into which the JE material is moulded. Like that material, which is an attempt to record the oral traditions and to account for the past, so the P document is an effort to write a new history of Creation, the patriarchal period, the Exodus, and the invasion of Canaan, interwoven with a mass of legislative enactments more or less modified from earlier ones, but also including many new ones concerning private and social life, as well as the Hebrew cultus.

Although it does provide a narrative from creation up through the conquest of Canaan, it cannot be regarded as accurate history because it is obvious that the author or authors handled the material with utmost freedom, omitting and adding at pleasure. Nevertheless, the work has a moral significance, in that it reflects the morals of its time. Even though some of the great prophets condemned the action of the priests, showing that they were not of the best and highest moral character, this Priests' Code shows a development in morals and in some respects a definite advancement over the earlier codes.

The material differs from the work of the priest and prophet Ezekiel in that Ezekiel looked to the future and wrote of things which should be, whereas the priests, using Moses as their mouthpiece, projected their thoughts into the past, conveying the impression to the people that the laws were actually given by Moses.

They did not consider it wrong to picture the glory of the temple, the decorations of gold and silver and so forth, and in the same narrative to locate them in the wilderness where silver and gold did not abound. Such difficulties, which come at once to our minds, troubled the priestly writers not at all. Again they did not hesitate to assert that the tabernacle was a massive thing, by stating the great weight of each beam, and then to concludethe narrative by stating that four wagons and eight oxen were used to transport the tabernacle, which must have weighed many tons.

The Patriarchs, at the pen of the priests, are entirely stripped of their individual characteristics and remain little more than so many names in history. Thus Abraham and Lot are not pictured as separating because there was a quarrel between the herdsmen, but simply because "the land was not able to bear them...for their substance was great."[1] Hagar, the handmaiden of

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1-Gen. 13:6

Sarah and the mother of Ishmael, Abraham's son, is presented as living happily in Abraham's home and Ishmael as growing up with Isaac on friendly terms and with him burying their aged father.[2] Jacob does not rob Esau of his birthright. Rebekah, his mother, asked his father to send him to Paddan-aram to seek a wife and not to escape the anger of Esau who was robbed of his legal rights.[3]

These few examples sufficiently illustrate the fact that the people considered it immoral and unworthy of their patriarchs to have obtained the honor and glory of a people and of their God through falsehood. Thus the falsehoods which the priests considered wrong and unworthy were suppressed. Polygamy, concubinage, and slavery, which flourished abundantly, were not resented. No attempt was made to conceal or excuse the polygamists nor their wives who had many slaves and who freely gave them to their respective husbands as concubines. Sarah, who gave her handmaiden Hagar, a slave, to Abraham as a concubine, is probably the best known example, but there are numerous others.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the Priests' Code is that the authors did not hesitate to

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2-Gen. 17:20 25:9

3-Gen. 28:1ff

call upon the aid of miracles to make the power of Yahweh seem supernatural. Where J says that the Red Sea waters were caused to go back by a strong east night wind--a perfectly natural phenomenon--the priests picture Moses standing on the brink of the water raising his rod and striking the water, which split and stood as a wall on either side of the Hebrews as they passed through. Likewise JE pictures the conquest of Canaan as a gradual process, but the priests picture the walls of Jericho crumbling down as a result of the Hebrews marching around the city seven times and blowing their trumpets. Numerous similar comparisons could be cited, and a study of them will prove that the priests apparently delighted in making Yahweh's dealings with his people unreasonable. At least it must be said that they did not consider themselves under any obligation to present the history of the Hebrews as taking a natural course. Yahweh frequently intervened and performed miracles.

Turning from the historical point of view to the legislative, one is confronted with a mass of rules dealing with personal and social life and the elaborate ceremonial system.

Early in the religion of the Hebrews we find a distinct recognition of the distinction between 'clean' and 'unclean'. Very early the words passed into the

the language of religion and designated that which did not and that which did render man clean or unclean. That which rendered man unclean was not necessarily an evil thing nor had it in itself any harmful physical effects. A man was called unclean if he deliberately or accidentally touched a corpse. A woman who gave birth to a male child was called unclean seven days and was forbidden to touch any holy thing or come into the sanctuary until after thirty days. If she gave birth to a daughter she remained unclean thirty-six days. After her days of uncleanness she was to offer a sacrifice for her purification.[4] Anything that was hateful to the god was considered unclean and shunned. It was not to be tolerated in his temple nor by his worshippers. But from the latter example quoted above we see that uncleannes could not always be avoided because it was necessary to society and to the perpetuation of the human race.

Uncleanness of any kind, normal or abnormal issues, etc., were considered to be contagious. A man with an issue was unclean. If he touched a chair or sat in a saddle or lay on a bed, these articles became unclean and would spread the uncleanness to any person touching them. The person who touched an unclean article was to bathe himself and wash his clothing and remain unclean until

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4-Lev. 2:12

evening of the same day.[5] The man who had the issue, after being cured, had to be in cleansing seven days. He had to bathe himself in running water and also wash his clothing, and then he had to bring "two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before Yahweh unto the door of the tent of meeting, and give them to the priest."[6]

These laws of 'clean' and 'unclean' were indeed not original with the priests. They existed long before this period; but their statement in such minute detail, and affecting all the of life, must have had a great effect on the morality of the people. Hearing these laws read or having learned them in youth, the people must have looked upon the temple as a divine 'house of God', with high respect, reverence, and awe. Uncleanness of any sort was shunned; and since these laws concerned man from birth to death they must have served definitely as a channel, guiding the activity of man.

Ezekiel in his works strongly emphasizes centralized worship and declares that the priests who 'went not astray' should officiate in the temple. The priests who 'went astray after strange gods' should do the menial services, which hitherto had been performed by slaves. The priests were not backward in that point and in their

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5-Lev. 15:10

6- Lev. 15:14

extensive legislation they laid down hard and fast rules for the officiating priests. About two centuries earlier Isaiah wrote, "the priest and prophets reel with strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine,...they err in vision, they stumble in judgment."[7] Ezekiel specifically warns them not to drink wine before they enter the sanctuary. The priests themselves came to see that it was best for them to be sober and to refrain from drinking, so that they could make a distinction between the "holy and the common, and between the clean and unclean,"[8] and pronounce just judgments. The priests were required to be physically and mentally sound, and so must not partake of anything that would disturb their mental equilibrium.

7-Isa. 28:7

8-Lev. 10:9

Chapter VIII

THE LAW OF HOLINESS

The book of Leviticus contains a group of chapters (17-26) with a foreign element. These chapters are distinguished from the Priests' Code because of new and often used phrases which are rarely found elsewhere. The principle which determines most conspicuously the character of the entire section is that of holiness--partly ceremonial, partly moral--as a quality distinguishing Israel, demanded of Israel by Jehovah...In consequence of this very prominent characteristic, the present group of chapters received from Klostermann in 1877 the happily chosen title of Das Heiligkeitgesetz, or "The Law of Holiness", which it has since retained."[1] Because this group of chapters thus stands out by itself, and because it concerns itself with similar social laws to those of the earlier codes, we must examine it separately and carefully for its moral value.

A reading of this Holiness Code shows that the author concerned himself first of all with one of the social evils. Sexual lust seems to have been one of the great evils which all social leaders had to combat, and one which had rendered the people unclean before Yahweh. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife" was a commandment

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1-Literature of Old Testament--Driver P.48

much older than David, who transgressed it by taking the wife of Uriah after quietly putting him in the battle front where he would be sure to be killed. The Law of Holiness, however, brings out the moral evil of this lust by emphasizing the uncleanness and saying "it is wickedness." "Defile ye not yourselves in any of these things."[2] The long list of relatives which a man was forbidden to marry has one important omission: a man is not forbidden to marry his own daughter. It is difficult to say whether this was originally one of the prohibitions and was lost, or whether Immanuel Benzinger is right in saying that the daughter had pecuniary value and therefore there was little or no danger of the practice becoming common, because the fathers were ordinarily glad to receive the money in exchange for their daughters. It seems reasonable, however, to conclude from the statement: "None of you shall approach to any that are near of him to him," that the daughter was included as well as any who were expressly named in the list.

This statement forbidding a man to marry certain kinswomen must not be interpreted as forbidding plurality of wives. It tells a man that he may not have sisters nor mother and daughter at the same time as his wives. It simply restricted his range of choice. Polygamy was

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2-Lev. 18:24

not considered a moral evil; it was taken for granted in the code. Illicit intercourse was strictly forbidden and was punishable by death. Both the adulterer and the adulteress were to suffer the capital penalty.

It has been noted above that certain of the prophets prohibited a Hebrew to sell a fellow Hebrew into slavery for unpaid debts, and special stress was laid on the law forbidding one to sell a Hebrew to a foreign master. It was likewise recognized that in former times they had legal and moral right to sell debtors to Hebrew and to foreign masters. The wives and children were a man's possession, a part of his property, and he was at liberty to use them as such. Although the idea of a wife and children being a man's property remained prevalent for many hundreds of years after the Law of Holiness was formulated (if completely out of existence now), this code forbade a man to use them as he thought best. This author recognized that sexual lust was a serious moral evil and therefore prohibited it. It is clear that he was not blind to facts and that he not only attacked the evils but he went to the source of them and prescribed rules accordingly. Thus the fathers, the owners of the young girls, were forbidden to sell them as harlots or as temple prostitutes. The daughter of a priest received special attention and was told that if she became a harlot

she defiled herself and also her father, and must pay the price with her life.[3]

In a similar way this code attacks slavery and poverty. A Hebrew slave had to be freed in the year of Jubilee--every fiftieth year. A man could not sell a fellow Hebrew into slavery. If a debtor sold himself to a master as a slave, that master could not use him as a slave but must treat him in a better manner, and must free him in the year of Jubilee. This volunteer slave also had the privilege of redeeming himself at any time or his friends were allowed to pay the redemptive price and the masterwas obliged to let him go.

The Code of Holiness attacks the lack of justice on the part of wealthy people. It denounces the use of unjust weights and balances, and unjust measuring sticks.[4] The corners of the fields should not be gleaned too carefully, the vineyards should not be gleaned nor should the fallen fruit be taken up.[5] This should be left for the poor and needy.[6] "Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor;" "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment;"[7] "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[8]

3-Lev. 21:9

4-Lev. 19:35-36

5-Lev. 19:9-10

6-Lev. 19:13

7-Lev. 19:15

8-Lev. 19:17-18b

All early codes had a similar attitude in respect for parents. "Thou shalt honor thy father and mother" is an ancient commandment, but our present code went beyond honor toward parents. It required reverence not only to the parents but toward all aged--"Rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man."[9]

It is interesting to note that this code likewise advances in respect toward foreigners or "sojourners". The earliest codes did not provide for the "sojourners", but only for the Hebrews. Although the priests made some provisions for them, the Holiness Code advanced with the time and offered not only protection against violence and slavery, but commanded the Hebrews to show friendliness and kinliness toward them. The should be respected and considered as "home-born"; and toward them was extended the injunction, "thou shalt love him as thyself."[10]

There immediately comes to mind the question of racial intermarriage. This code enjoined 'loving the stranger as oneself.' Does this mean that it favored intermarriage? Since this is not characteristic of the Jews and insomuch as the former codes and prophets denounced it, it seems reasonable to suppose that this code does not encourage intermarriage nor even favor it.

9-Lev. 19:32

10-Lev. 19:34

It does, however, lead the people to see the immorality of hating and doing injustice to any man, whether he be Jew or Gentile.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel, in prescribing a way for the Jews to regain the favor of the Divine, proclaimed uprighteousness in character: "Amend all your ways." Zechariah advanced a step by denouncing evil thoughts: "Let none of you devise evil in his heart against his neighbor."[11] The Holiness Code, however, goes even beyond Zechariah by commanding the positive law, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," which is one of the great principles of Jesus and of Christianity. Jesus, of course, added, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you,"[12] which is the supreme test of a good will--the fundamental principle of morality. For a leader to command the people to love their neighbors, foreigners and kinsmen, was indeed a long advance from early Israelitish ideas.

The Law of Holiness may be regarded an attempt to harmonize morality and uprightness of character with the elaborate ceremonial system of the priests. The latter demanded first and foremost devotion and observance of their laws while the former pledged devotion to Yahweh

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11-Zec. 8:17

12. Math. 5:44

through character for the attainment of an ideal humanity. Yahweh is holy and he demands of his worshippers that they also be holy--this is the tone of the Holiness Code. What it means to be holy, of course, has been discussed above and appears from the laws laid down. Yahweh is just, true, and loves his people and thus he requires of his people the same. Law or ceremonial observance alone could not please Yahweh. He did not desire their offerings save as the accompaniment to purity of life. What Yahweh desired and required of his people was service prompted by love.

Chapter IX

THE MESSIANIC HOPE

The Old Testament is being studied today more or less as a history of the Hebrew people. Some call it "the Word of God," and some "a record of what a people thought of God."

All the records have an account of what the people thought about God and their relation to Him, as well as historical value. The historical element shows that the Hebrew people were surrounded by powerful nations and that their land served as a battle field for them, and that the Hebrews suffered much at the hands of the victorious powers.

It seems, however, that there was always a prophet at hand with a message of hope, when the people began to complain and charge Yahweh. The element of hope or deliverance is prominent in all records. Abraham was childless and complained, but not in vain. God answered him with a promise that he should have a son so that the race would not die out. Noah was promised escape from destruction and informed of the new and better day. After the flood God promised him that there would never be another flood. Joseph was told in a dream that he would be great and that the stars and moon would bow down before him. Moses was appointed to lead the people into the

Promised Land. Thus promises of deliverance and hope for a better day are interwoven with all the Code.

Likewise the prophets came forth with hope of deliverance. Jeremiah proclaimed deliverance and hope of a new day by repeating "amend ye your ways." Ezekiel in the Babylonian captivity on the banks of the River Chebar encouraged the homesick people with the promise of release and return to their homes. The Unknown Prophet advanced the wonderful fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, Haggai and Zechariah also spoke of a king who should deliver them from all their troubles.

"What arethese promises?" one may ask. The prediction of Jesus," the old school would answer. But are they?

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is one of the passages upon which the old school bases its argument of the prediction of Jesus or the Messianic Hope, because Jesus most wonderfully met the requirements recorded there. This we must admit, and gladly, for that chapter certainly describes an ideal man which Jesus was. But are we admitting prediction? No. This Unknown Prophet was a successor of Jeremiah, who also met his requirements. Furthermore, this Messianic Hope which is prominent in most of the prophetic books and the early codes gives us more positive evidence that these men were

not talking and writing about something which they themselves did not understand.

Let us illustrate this by the use of references from Haggai and Zechariah who may be used as typical examples of true prophets. One need not stretch his imagination very much to picture the two clinching their fists and gritting their teeth as they face their task. But these "stiff-necked people" were not satisfied with one answer and both Haggai and Zechariah resorted to the assurance of hope. Were they speaking of Jesus? It does not seem reasonable after reading "In that day will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant...and will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith Yahweh of hosts,"[1] or "Take thee silver...in order to make a crown, and place it upon the head of Zerubbabel... Here is the man called scion ! He shall flourish where he is rooted."[2]

Still, many refuse to understand anything from these references but prediction. A careful study of the Messianic references proves to any open minded student that they are not predictions of Jesus and that the authors well understood about what they were talking and writing.

1-Haggai 2:23

2-Zec. 6:10-12

Looking at this element of assurance of hope and deliverance from the point of view of morality, it seems to me to have more value and importance if we deny the prediction of Jesus and say that the prophets were open-minded men who dared to face the existing facts and their natural consequences, as well as searchers for truth. Thus from sound and reasonable thinking they drew their conclusions. Jeremiah would say, "continue in your evil ways and you will see destruction, but if you 'mend your ways' you will see a better day." Do we not believe that Jerusalem would have been saved had Zedekiah listened to the advice of Jeremiah? One may say the same for Isaiah and others. Had only the people listened, they would have suffered less.

It does not mean that these speeches or sermons of promises had no moral effect simply because the rulers did not immediately order a social reform. Let us again turn to Haggai and Zechariah. They promised the people relief from famine if they would rebuild the ruined temple. To this challenge the people were not slow to respond. It stirred them to action and the temple was erected. Haggai also said that heaven and earth would shake and that all nations would bring their choicest treasures for the glory of the temple and that Judah would become a glorious nation.

With both the statements of the prophets in mind one is at liberty to choose whether the promise of prosperity or the promise of a glorious nation prompted the people to act. I am inclined to conclude from this and other similar incidents that the former was most interesting to the mass because they, like the people of today, did not lack a desire for material prosperity. (Present a reasonable prescription for national prosperity to our nation today, and see how quickly our people would act!) Haggai held that prosperity was the reward for good deeds and poverty for evil.

Ezekiel and the Great Unknown Prophet with their messages of release from captivity and restoration of their people and country certainly must have moved many wearied Hebrews to take new courage and greater hope for returning home. The promise of the return to Jerusalem, of course, encouraged them but it is very difficult to say whether that was more encouraging than the promise of national restoration.

The glory of Israel, the chosen people of Yahweh, was a firm rooted belief. It was the promise to Abraham before he had a son; it was the promise to Isaac; to his son and to his son's sons. National glory after entering the Promised Land was the hope and source of zeal for Moses and his successor. National glory plus national

victory and power were the hope and foresight of many. National victory, in glory and power, was a part of the Hebrews' belief, tradition, and religion. It was believed to be a direct promise to all the Hebrew fathers from Yahweh. But when the King of Glory came, his own knew him not and he was rejected. They looked for national glory, physical release from suffering, and for a king who would lead his army against the political power of Rome and free all the Jews from the burdens of that central power. They waited not for him who "grew up before him as a tender plant,"[3] one who "was oppressed yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth."[4] He was not the expected king. He was not in favor of fighting the Romans. He was "esteemed smitten of God."

Although rejecting the prediction of Jesus, one cannot afford to doubt the moral value of the promise of deliverance and national triumph. We are today constantly told by one group that this depression is not a new thing and that if we will keep courage, we shall see prosperity in the future. And many are encouraged by such and similar remarks and live in new hope for a better day. Thus it was with the Hebrews, save that they were taught from childhood to hope and look for

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3-Isa. 53:2a

4-Isa. 53:7a

a better day, a day when their nation would be glorified and be triumphant over all their enemies. Thus each new messenger with a report of deliverance brought more hope and gave the people more confidence in their hope.

Into a nation that had time after time been conquered and forced to submission by powerful neighbors, and into a people who were very much conscious of a powerful God, but who were stubborn and "stiff-necked", came at last the King of Glory with LOVE as his unconquerable army and weapon, and service and mercy as his protecting shield. He came with a new conception of God as the Heavenly Father of Love, and put the final seal of perfection on a developing morality. He came not in political power to free the people from burdens, but he came in the glory and power of spiritual victory which alone can overpower physical suffering; which alone is the inspiring force promoting man onward in search of new and better truths; and which alone can help man stand in awe and wonder before the God of this universe and of mankind.

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